

# HISTOPLASMOSIS

Histoplasmosis is caused by the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum* var. *capsulatum* which grows as a mold in soil and as a yeast in human and animal hosts. Common reservoirs are soil around old chicken houses, in caves with bats, around starling and blackbird roosts, and in decaying trees. The organism growing in soil produces spore forms (conidia). Breathing the airborne conidia causes infection.

Histoplasmosis may be asymptomatic or take one of the four clinical forms:

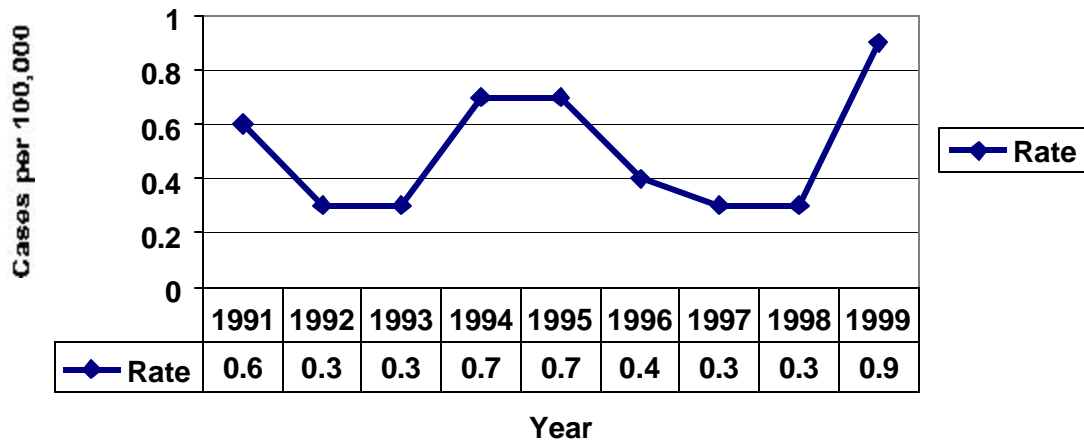
- 1) **Acute benign respiratory** - mild respiratory illness with general malaise, fever, chills, headache, myalgia, chest pains, nonproductive cough and scattered small calcifications of the lung.
- 2) **Acute disseminated** -debilitating fever, GI symptoms, bone marrow suppression, lymphadenopathy. Most frequent in children and immunosuppressed; fatal if not treated.
- 3) **Chronic pulmonary** - clinically and radiologically resembles chronic pulmonary tuberculosis with cavitations, usually in middle-aged and elderly persons with underlying emphysema.
- 4) **Chronic disseminated** - low-grade fever, weight loss, weakness, liver and spleen enlargement, mucosal ulcers, subacute course with slow progression; fatal if not treated.

## Laboratory Criteria for Confirmation:

- Isolation of *H. capsulatum* from culture of bone marrow, sputum, or lesions, **OR**
- Histologic demonstration of intracellular yeast cells from bone marrow or tissue biopsy, **OR**
- Detection of *H. capsulatum* polysaccharide antigen in urine or serum, **OR**
- Rise in CF titers to either histoplasmin or yeast-phase antigen.
- Positive histoplasmin skin test **IS NOT** sufficient evidence.

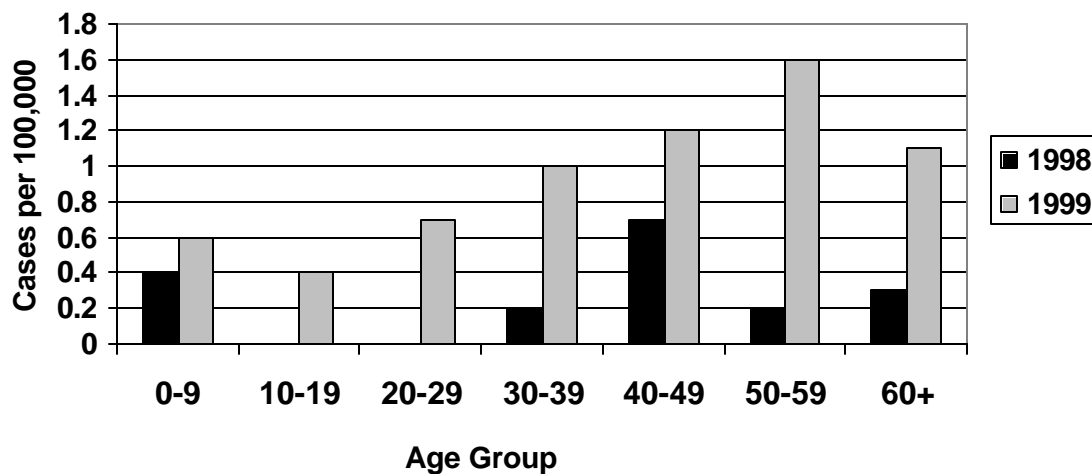
	1998	1999
Number of Cases	10	37
Rate per 100,000	0.2	0.9
Rate by Gender		
Female	0.2	0.5
Male	0.3	1.4

### Histoplasmosis Incidence, Kentucky 1991-1999

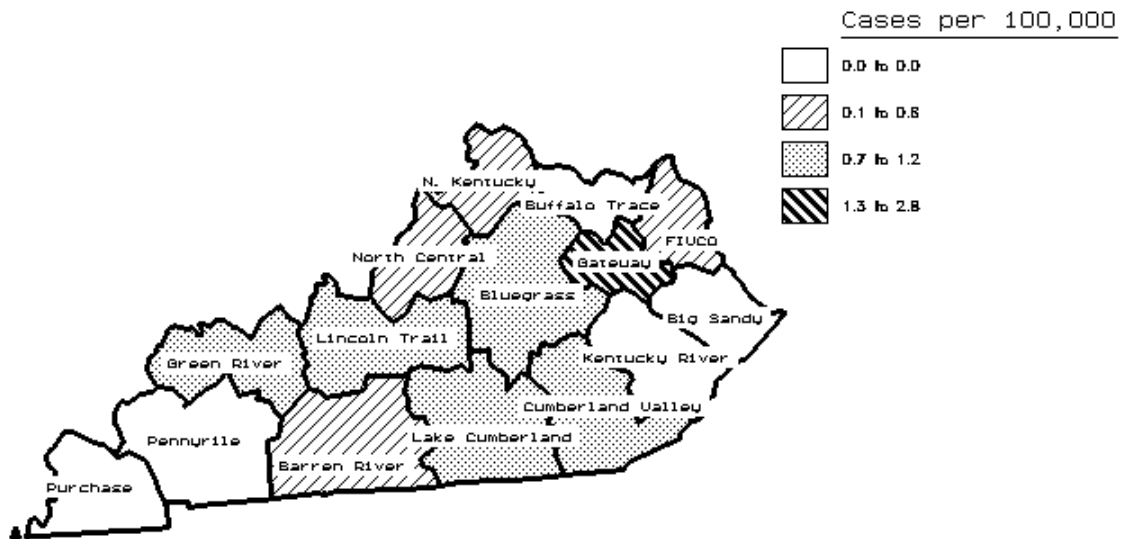


The reported incidence of Histoplasmosis rose significantly in 1999, which reflects better reporting from some areas, as Histoplasmosis is endemic in Kentucky.

### Histoplasmosis, Age-Specific Incidence, Kentucky 1998-1999



## Histoplasmosis by District, Kentucky Average Annual Incidence, 1998-1999



In **1998** six districts reported cases with the Gateway District reporting the highest rate, 1.4 per 100,000 and the Lincoln Trail District following with 1.3 cases per 100,000.

In **1999** 10 districts reported cases with the Gateway District again reporting the highest rate, 4.1 per 100,000, followed by the Lake Cumberland District (2.1 per 100,000), the Bluegrass District (1.8 per 100,000) and the Cumberland Valley District (1.7 per 100,000).